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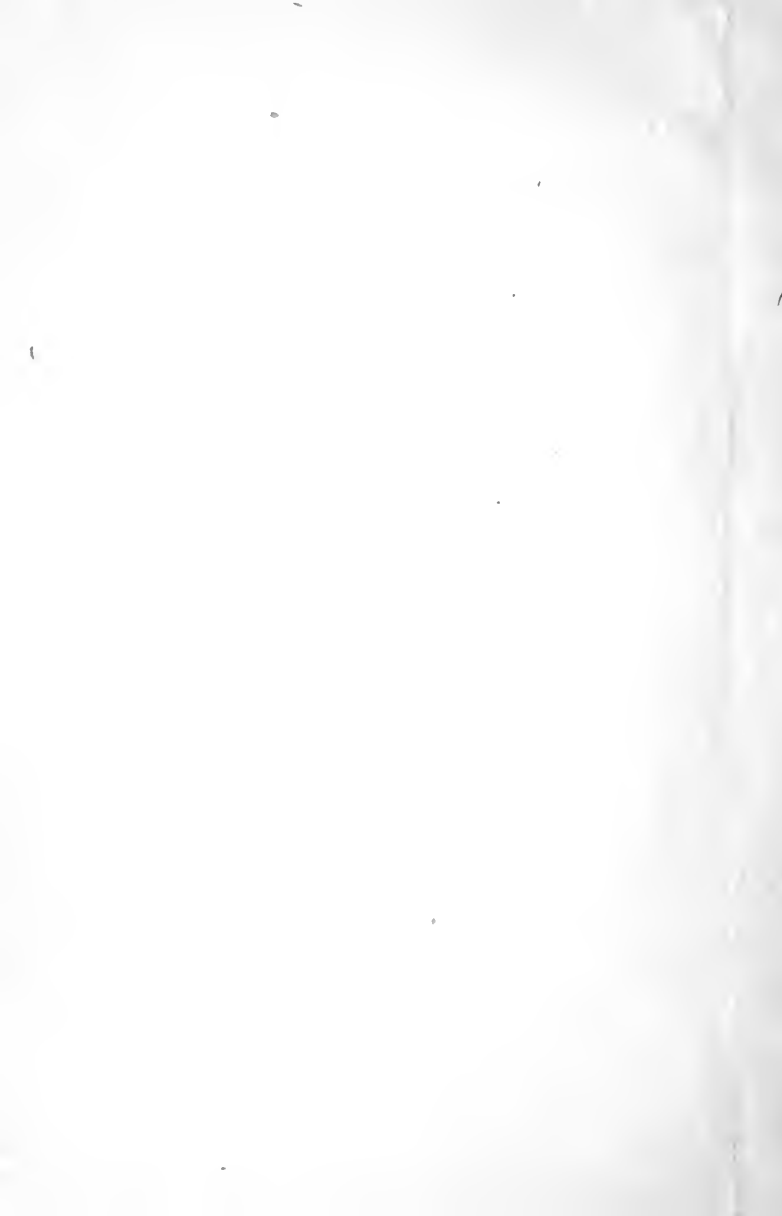
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FLOWER OF YOUTH:
POEMS IN WAR TIME

BY
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JOINING THE COLOURS

(WEST KENTS, DUBLIN, *August* 1914)

THERE they go marching all in step so gay !

Smooth-cheeked and golden, food for shells and guns.
Blithely they go as to a wedding day,
The mothers' sons.

The drab street stares to see them row on row

On the high tram-tops, singing like the lark.
Too careless-gay for courage, singing they go
Into the dark.

With tin whistles, mouth-organs, any noise,

They pipe the way to glory and the grave ;
Foolish and young, the gay and golden boys
Love cannot save.

High heart ! High courage ! The poor girls they kissed

Run with them : they shall kiss no more, alas !
Out of the mist they stepped—into the mist
Singing they pass.

THE LOWLANDS OF FLANDERS

(An Old Song Resung)

THE night that I was married
Our Captain came to me :
Rise up, rise up, new-married man
And come at once with me.

For the Lowlands of Flanders,
It's there that we must fight ;
So look your last and buss your last,
For we shall sail to-night.

'Tis all for our Counterie
And for our King we go
To the Lowlands of Flanders
Against the German foe.

The girl that weds a soldier
Must never blench for fear ;
I kissed my last and looked my last
Upon my lovely dear.

The Lowlands of Flanders,
Their rivers run so red.
But I must say Good-bye, my dear,
My only dear, I said.

For now I must go sailing
Upon the stormy main ;
Good-bye, good-bye, my only Love,
Till I shall come again.

I put her white arms from me,
Her cheek was cold as clay.
The night that I was married
No longer I might stay.

Our bugles they are blowing,
And I must sail the sea,
For the Lowlands of Flanders
Betwixt my love and me.

THE CALL

I hear an Army!

MILLIONS of men coming up from the edge of the world,
The ring of unnumbered feet ever louder and louder
Comes on and on like a mighty untameable tide,
Steady, implacable, out of the North and the South,
Out of the East and the West, they answer the call
Of her who stands, her eyes towards God and the stars,
Liberty, daughter of God, calling her men.

What manner of men are these? Like the desert sands
Uncounted, many as locusts, darkening the sky?
White men, black men, men of the tawny gold,
Golden-eyed like the lion, sons of the sun,
Men from the snow, their eyes like frost or a sword;
They have but one heart, one desire, they run one way.
Hurrying, hurrying to the shrill trumpet call.

Men from the ice-floes, men from the jungles come;
This from the arms of his bride, that from his dead.

Men from the plough, the mart, the mill and the street
They run : they are heroes : the fire fuses them all.
Head uplifted and proud, like heroes they step,
Singing their battle song in the troubled dawn
Of the day of Liberty, flaming torch of the world.

I hear an Army !

THE GOLDEN BOY

IN times of peace, so clean and bright,
And with a new-washed morning face,
He walked Pall Mall, a goodly sight,
The finished flower of all the race.

Or through Bond Street and Piccadilly,
Went spick-and-span, without a soil,
As careless as the July lily
That spins not, neither does she toil.

He took his soldiering as sport,
And beauteous in his mufti stirred
Romance i' the simple female sort
That loves a guardsman or a lord.

And now, knee-deep in muddy water,
Unwashed, unshaven, see him go !
His garments stained with mud and slaughter
Would break the heart of Savile Row.

The danger's in his blood like wine,
The old heroic passion leaps ;
The son of the mighty fighting line
Goes glad whatever woman weeps.

He plays the game, winning or losing,
As in the playing-fields at home ;
This picnic's nothing of his choosing,
But since it's started, let it come !

He lives his hour with keenest zest,
And midst the flying death he spares
A laugh to the light-heart schoolboy jest,
Mingled with curses and with prayers.

Gay as at Eton or at Harrow,
Counts battles as by goals and runs :
God keep him from Death's flying arrow
To give his England fighting sons.

THE GREAT CHANCE

Now strikes the hour upon the clock
The black sheep may rebuild the years :
May lift the father's pride he broke
And wipe away his mother's tears.

To him, the mark for thrifty scorn,
God hath another chance to give,
Sets in his heart a flame new-born
By which his muddied soul may live.

This is the day of the prodigal,
The decent people's shame and grief,
When he shall make amends for all.
The way to Glory's bloody and brief.

Clean from his baptism of blood,
New from the fire he springs again,
In shining raiment white and good,
Beyond the wise, home-keeping man.

Somewhere to-night—no tears be shed!—
With shaking hands they turn the sheet
To find his name among the dead,
Flower of the Army and the Fleet.

They tell, with proud and stricken face,
Of his white boyhood far away—
Who talked of trouble or disgrace?
“Our splendid son is dead!” they say.

THE WATCHERS

THE cottages all lie asleep ;
The sheep and lambs are folded in ;
Winged sentinels the vale will keep
Until the hours of life begin.

The children with their prayers all said
Sleep until cockcrow shall awake
The gardens in their gold and red
And robins in the bush and brake.

The fields of harvest golden-white,
The fields of pasture rich and green,
Sleep on nor fear the kindly night,
The watching mountains set between.

The river sings its sleepy song,
Nought stirs the wakeful owl beside :
Our peace is builded sure and strong :
No evil beast can creep inside.

St Patrick and St Brigid hold
The vale its little houses all,
While men-at-arms in white and gold
Glide swiftly by the outer wall.

St Brendan and St Kevin pluck
The robes of God that He may hear—
And Colum : “ Keep the Irish flock
So that no shame or sin come near.”

What news of Belgian folk to-day ?
How fare the village and the town ?
O Belgium's all on fire they say,
And all her towers are toppling down.

What are her angels doing then,
And are the Belgian saints asleep,
That in this night of dule and pain
The Belgians mourn, the Belgians weep ?

THE BRIDE

WEAVE me no wreath of orange blossom,
No bridal white shall me adorn ;
I wear a red rose in my bosom ;
To-morrow I shall wear the thorn.

Bring me no gauds to deck my beauty,
Put by the jewels and the lace ;
My love to honour and to duty
Was plighted ere he saw my face.

I hear his impatient charger neighing,
I hear the trumpets blow afar !
His comrades ride, as to a Maying,
Jesting and splendid to the war.

Why is my lady-mother weeping ?
Why is my father grievèd sore ?
Oh, love, God have you in His keeping,
The day you leave your true-love's door.

Gay is the golden harvest spreading,
The orchard's all in rose and gold ;
Who said it was a mournful wedding ?
My hand in yours, Love, is not cold.

Go glad and gay to meet the foeman,
I love you to my latest breath ;
Oh, love, there is no happier woman.
See, I am smiling ! Love—till death !

THE RIDERS

RHEIMS is down in fire and smoke,
The hour of God is at the stroke.

Round and round the ruined place,—
Jesu, Mary, give us grace !

There are two riders clad in mail,
Silver as the moon pale.

One is tall as a knight's spear,
The younger one is lowlier.

Small and slim and like a maid—
Steeds and riders cast no shade.

Who are then these cavaliers ?
There was a sound as Heaven dropt tears.

Who are these that ride so light,
Soundless in the flaming light,

Where Rheims burns, that was given
By France to Mary, Queen of Heaven ?

O our Rheims, our Rheims is down,
Naught is left of her renown.

Hist ! what sound is in the breeze,
Like the sighing of forest trees ?

Or a great wind, or an army,
Or the waves of the wild sea ?

The tall knight rides fierce and fast
To the sound of a trumpet-blast.

The little knight in fire and flame,
Slender and soft as a dame,

Rides and is not far behind :
His long hair floats on the wind.

And ever the tramp of chivalry
Comes like the sound of the sea.

This is Michael rides abroad,
Prince of the army of God,

And this like a lily arrayed,
Is Joan, the blessed Maid.

Rheims is down in fire and smoke
And the hour of God's at the stroke.

“WHAT TURNED THE GERMANS BACK?”

WHAT turned the German myriads back
From Paris whither they had won?
The sword dropped from their hold grown slack;
Children of Attila the Hun,
Like Attila, went backward driven
By a young shepherdess of Heaven.

A shepherdess is Genevieve,
And though her flock should wander light,
This shepherdess is quick to save
The black, the speckled and the white.
She takes her golden crook and goes
And deals destruction to its foes.

She who turned Attila back, so slim,
A shepherdess that keeps the flock,
Waited as once she did for him,
Slight as a reed or her own crook;
“Turn back in God’s Name!” They went back.
The tide is stemmed for her sweet sake.

White Genevieve upon her hill
Prays, and the German hosts retreat.
She plucks the Robes of Heaven still
That Heaven give victory for defeat ;
And keeps her motley flock in sight,
The black, the speckled and the white.

A GIRL'S SONG

THE Meuse and Marne have little waves ;
The slender poplars o'er them lean.
One day they will forget the graves
That give the grass its living green.

Some brown French girl the rose will wear
That springs above his comely head ;
Will twine it in her russet hair,
Nor wonder why it is so red.

His blood is in the rose's veins,
His hair is in the yellow corn.
My grief is in the weeping rains
And in the keening wind forlorn.

Flow softly, softly, Marne and Meuse ;
Tread lightly, all ye browsing sheep ;
Fall tenderly, O silver dews,
For here my dear Love lies asleep.

The earth is on his sealèd eyes,
The beauty marred that was my pride ;
Would I were lying where he lies,
And sleeping sweetly by his side !

The Spring will come by Meuse and Marne,
The birds be blithesome in the tree.
I heap the stones to make his cairn
Where many sleep as sound as he.

THE YOUNG MOTHER

IN dreadful times of tears and war
She sails, a little fixèd star,
Or like a little ship she glides
With gentle winds and favouring tides
Up to the harbour bar.

Wrapped in all mild tranquillities
She muses : inward gaze her eyes ;
And lest she slip upon a stone
Gabriel or some shining one
Guards her high destinies.

No rumour reaches her at all,
Beyond her safe encompassing wall,
Of a mad world that slays and slays :
She sees a little one that plays
And sleeps at evenfall.

She is in the House of Life : and where
She goes the angels bend to her,
A little secret garden-close,
Sweet with the lily and the rose,
With frankincense and myrrh.

THE TEMPLE

WHAT of Louvain and of Rheims
Made for God by man ? What then ?
Here be temples more than man's
Wrought by God for His own men.

Scattered in the rain and frost,
Marred of beauty, there they be,
Temples of the Holy Ghost,
Broken, ruined piteously.

Bodies all so finely wrought,
Cunning deftness shaped them well ;
These, God's ultimate, loving thought
For His Spirit's citadel.

Beautiful from head to foot,
Young, dear darlings all unflawed
For their mother's kiss. What brute
Dares deface the image of God ?

Oh, the Temple's down ! all marred
Gay and golden boys must lie :
Bitter-sweet as spikenard
Is the old name we called them by.

Hush ! God's Temple in its fall
Breaks to set the spirit free
From the golden cage and thrall
Into heaven-winged liberty.

From the cage the bird is flown,
Sings so high above our sphere.
Hush,—be never a sigh or moan :
The fledged bird flies without fear.

All our loves are gathered in,
Every gay and golden lad ;
On new raiment, white and clean,
They behold God and are glad.

THE SUMMONS

(V. L., 14th September 1914)

STRAIGHT to his death he went,
A smile on his lips,
All his life's joy unspent,
Into eclipse.

The song of the shell he heard
Cleaving the dark,
As though 'twere the song of a bird,
Linnet or lark.

Why would he go so fast
Out to the dead,
All in a heavenly haste
Not to be stayed ?

What did he see afar
That drew him after ?
Light from a merry star,
Singing and laughter ?

Nay, but a face was his
 Only in dreams,
Only in dreams of bliss
 In the star-gleams.

Nay, but a face that watched
 Long years to see
Who came by the door unlatched,
 If it were he.

What was the voice before
 That lured him on ?
“ Oh, thou long-hungered for,
 My son, my son ! ”

Lo, he hath heard, hath seen,
 He hath slipped over
Where the great days begin
 For friend and lover.

THE LITTLE FLOCK

CHRIST, now keep the little flock
Which Thou bad'st not to fear :
Childing women and old folk
And the little children dear.

In this night of Hell revealed
Call them that they run with Thee,
And come out in a green field
Where they gather round Thy knee.

All poor women that give suck,
All that are with child, lead Thou,
By the margins of a brook
Where is daisied peace enow.

Christ, remember now the sick ;
Feeble knees and hanging head.
When they cry on Thee, come quick,
And their sickness shall be stayed.

Where Thou temperest the wind,
Where the drenching rains leave off,
When they run with Thee, O Kind !
Dear, they shall be well enough !

A LAMENT

(FOR *Holy Cross Day*, 1914)

CLOUDS is under clouds and rain
For there will not come again
Two, the beloved sire and son
Whom all gifts were rained upon.

Kindness is all done, alas,
Courtesy and grace must pass,
Beauty, wit and charm lie dead,
Love no more may wreath the head.

Now the branch that waved so high
No wind tosses to the sky ;
There's no flowering time to come,
No sweet leafage and no bloom.

Percy, golden-hearted boy,
In the heyday of his joy
Left his new-made bride and chose
The steep way that Honour goes.

Took for his the deathless song
Of the love that knows no wrong :
Could I love thee, dear, so true
Were not Honour more than you ?

(Oh, forgive, dear Lovelace, laid
In this mean Procrustean bed !)
Dear, I love thee best of all
When I go, at England's call.

In our magnificent sky aglow
How shall we this Percy know
Where he shines among the suns
And the planets and the moons ?

Percy died for England, why,
Here's a sign to know him by !
There's one dear and fixèd star,
There's a youngling never far.

Percy and his father keep
The old loved companionship,
And shine downward in one ray
Where at Clouds they wait for day.

A HERO

(September 1914)

HE was so foolish, the poor lad,
He made superior people smile
Who knew not of the wings he had
Budding and growing all the while ;
Nor that the laurel wreath was made
Already for his curly head.

Silly and childish in his ways ;
They said : “ His future comes to naught.”
His future ! In the dreadful days
When in a toil his feet were caught
He hacked his way to glory bright
Before his day went down in night.

He fretted wiser folk—small blame !
Such futile, feeble brains were his.
Now we doff hats to hear his name,
Ask pardon where his spirit is,
Because we never guessed him for
A hero in the disguise he wore.

It matters little how we live
So long as we may greatly die.
Fashioned for great things, O forgive
Our dullness in the days gone by !
Now glory wraps you like a cloak
From us, and all such common folk.

'MID THE PITEOUS HEAPS OF DEAD

'MID the piteous heaps of dead
Goes one weary golden head
Tossing ever to and fro,
Calling loud and calling low.

*Mother, mother, step so light,
Mother, lay your fingers white
On my forehead like a dew !
Mother, mother, where are you ?*

Still so loud he makes his cry
That the dying cannot die ;
All the writhing field's one groan
While he lies and cries alone.

But his mother's far away ;
Cannot hear him cry and say :
*Mother, I am dying, come !
Mother, I am lost from home !*

Mary, Mother of all men,
Come and comfort him in pain.
Take his young head to the breast
Where your Child and God had rest.

Mary, Mary, step so light.
Mary, lay your fingers white
On his forehead ! He shall dream
That his mother comforts him.

Mary, Mother, croon him o'er
Lullabies you sang before !
Mary, ease him, crooning low,
In the way that mothers know !

TO ONE IN GRIEF

(FOR *June* 1913. *September* 1914)

SIMON the Cyrenean bore

The Cross of Christ up Calvary Hill.

Blessed be Simon's lot before

Honour and ease and world's good-will :
You,—you would choose his lot above
All gifts and glories, yea, all love !

Now when for your two glorious men

Your heart is broken, and your joy
On earth shall not be built again,—

Oh, what a lover, what a boy !—
Dear heart, look up ! Who helps you on
The way that you must walk alone ?

For when the Cross that you must bear

Galls your poor shoulders till they bleed,
And when the thorns are on your hair,

And Love-lies-bleeding : then indeed
One will come stepping light and take
The tears, the burden, the heart-break.

Happy is she who to Thine ears
Pours all her lamentations ! Yea,
When Thou dost wipe away her tears
And healing words of comfort say.
Thou makest Thy Cross both sweet and light
For souls like hers that walk in white.

INDIAN SUMMER

This is the sign !

THIS flooding splendour, golden and hyaline,
This sun a golden sea on hill and plain,—
That God forgets not, that He walks with men.
His smile is on the mountain and the pool
And all the fairy lakes are beautiful.

This is the word !

That makes a thing of flame the water-bird.
This mercy of His fulfilled in the magical
Clear glow of skies from dawn to evenfall,
Telling His Hand is over us, that we
Are not delivered to the insatiable sea.

This is the pledge !

The promise writ in gold to the water's edge :
His bow's in Heaven and the great floods are over.
Oh, broken hearts, lift up ! The Immortal Lover
Embraces, comforts with the enlivening sun,
The sun He bids stand still till the day is won.

TO TWO BEREAVED

(FOR G. S. C., *20th October*, R. S. C., *28th October 1914*)

Now in your days of worst distress,
The empty days that stretch before,
When all your sweet's turned bitterness;—
The Hand of the Lord is at your door.

And when at morn beside your bed
Grief waits to tell you it is true,
That both your darling boys are dead ;
The Mercy of the Lord bends down to you.

When you are frozen and stripped bare
And over your joy is raised a stone,
The foot of the Lord is on your stair ;
The Lord's mercy is never done.

More than the joys of common men,—
The gifts of the Lord are past desire—
They shall be given to you again,
They shall sit down beside your fire.

The young and laurelled heads shall shine,
 Making a glory in your days
As a light burns in a secret shrine :
 The Love of the Lord is passing praise.

The Lord recalls not gifts once given :
 They shall sit down beside your hearth ;
They shall come in, in white, new-shriven,
 Make you new Heaven and a new earth.

The Will of the Lord is great and good,
 The cup of your joy shall He brim o'er ;
They shall come in with life renewed.
 They shall go out from you no more.

AUTUMNAL

THE Autumn leaves are dying quietly,
Scarlet and orange, underfoot they lie ;
 They had their youth and prime
 And now's the dying time ;
Alas, alas, the young, the beloved, must die !

They are dying like the leaves of Autumn fast,
Scattered and broken, blown on every blast :
 The darling young, the brave,
 Love had no power to save.
Poor Love-lies-bleeding, Love's in ruins, downcast.

Alas, alas, the Autumn leaves are flying !
They had their Summer and 'tis time for dying.
 But these had barely Spring.
 Love trails a broken wing,
Walks through deserted woods, moaning and sighing.

MEDIATION

(After St Anselm)

IF Thou, Lord God, willest to judge
This, Thy very piteous clay
Which to save Christ did not grudge
His last dying, I shall say :
Lord, I interpose Christ's death
'Twixt these children and Thy wrath.

Then if Thou shouldst say : Their shame
Is as scarlet in Mine eyes—
I shall ask : *Who took their blame ?*
Look, Lord, on this Sacrifice !
Is Thy Son's blood not more bright
Which hath washed their scarlet white ?

Then, if Thou Thy wrath should'st keep
And Thy gaze should'st still avert
From Thy Son's most piteous sheep,
I shall ask : *Who bare the hurt ?*
I present Christ's death and pain
'Twixt Thine anger and these men.

Lord, they die by millions

And they look to Thee—take thought!—

This dear flock, that is Thy Son's,

By the richest ransom bought.

See, Thy dead Son lies between,

Thee, the High Judge, and their sin.

THE HEROES

BY such strange and wonderful ways
God would save His world again.
All our days are holy days,
Starry heroes all our men.

There's naught common or unclean
In this splendid new-made earth :
Hearts uplifted, eyes serene,
Grief goes gayer now than mirth.

Quietly in the sacred night
Tears must fall, O noble tears !
That are shed in the Lord's sight
And are only for His ears.

Who would mourn aloud for sons
Gorgeous in our firmament,
Starry constellations
In the way their fathers went ?

From the innumerable grave
There will spring a world new-born,
With the austerest eyes and brave
And its clear gaze towards the morn.

He who gave His Son to die
For man's purchase, gives once more
These, His beloved sons, to buy
Him a world worth dying for.

THE GREAT MERCY

*Betwixt the saddle and the ground
Was mercy sought and mercy found.*

Yea, in the twinkling of an eye,
He cried ; and Thou hast heard his cry.

Between the bullet and its mark
Thy face made morning in his dark.

And while the shell sang on its path
Thou hast run, Thou hast run, preventing death.

Thou hast run before and reached the goal,
Gathered to Thee the unhoused soul.

Thou art not bound by Time or Space :
So fast Death runs : Thou hast won the race.

Thou hast said to beaten Death : *Go tell
Of victories thou once hadst. All's well !*

*Death, here none die but thee and Sin
Now the great days of Life begin.*

*And to the Soul : This day I rise
And thee with Me to Paradise.*

*Betwixt the saddle and the ground
Was Mercy sought and Mercy found.*

MEETINGS

As up and down I fare by road and street
The mothers of our men-at-arms I meet
 Who die for mine and me,
 That we go safe and free,
Sit in the sun, sleep soft and find life sweet.

I have two sons too young to fight, too young,
God grant if my hour comes I may be strong,
 And caught in such a strait
 May praise God and be great,
Giving my sons to save some woman from wrong !

Oh, mothers of dead heroes, ye I know,
My heart sends you a greeting, soft and low ;
 Blessed are ye whose sons
 Amid the ransomed ones
Throng to the banners of Heaven as white as snow.

Somehow, by some secret and certain sign,
The mothers of the beloved I divine
 Who died in my sons' place.
 My heart kneels and gives grace.
Gives thanks for you, for you, proud sisters of mine !

FLOWER OF YOUTH

LEST Heaven be thronged with grey-beards hoary,
God, who made boys for His delight,
Stoops in a day of grief and glory
And calls them in, in from the night.
When they come trooping from the war
Our skies have many a new gold star.

Heaven's thronged with gay and careless faces,
New-waked from dreams of dreadful things,
They walk in green and pleasant places
And by the crystal water-springs
Who dreamt of dying and the slain,
And the fierce thirst and the strong pain.

Dear boys ! They shall be young for ever.
The Son of God was once a boy.
They run and leap by a clear river
And of their youth they have great joy.
God who made boys so clean and good
Smiles with the eyes of fatherhood.

Now Heaven is by the young invaded ;
 Their laughter's in the House of God.
Stainless and simple as He made it
 God keeps the heart o' the boy unflawed.
The old wise Saints look on and smile,
They are so young and without guile.

Oh, if the sonless mothers weeping,
 And widowed girls could look inside
The glory that hath them in keeping
 Who went to the Great War and died,
They would rise and put their mourning off,
And say : " Thank God, he has enough ! "

“ UNHOUSEL'D, UNANOINTED, UNANEL'D ”

WHEN these men must go alone
Sans an absolution,
When their sins are heavy as lead,
Thou Thyself will lift the head ;
Thou, High Priest, wilt whisper low,
Te Absolvo ! ere they go.

When there is no sacrifice,
Bread and Wine for Thy disguise,
Come Thou in the Spirit then ;
As at Agincourt our men
With desire a blade of grass
Served as Eucharist and Mass.

Lay Thyself the oil on lips,
Limbs and eyes, before the eclipse—
As once Magdalen did to Thee—
And so speed them, safe and free,
To lie down with Thee a while
And to waken to Thy smile.

They shall sit down at the Feast
Where Thou are Sacrament and Priest.

ALL SOULS

THERE'S traffic in the worlds immortal,
For many souls are flying home,
Striving and pushing at the portal
For sight of glorious things to come.

What rout of wings against the sunset ?
What rosy plumes the dawning bar ?
Heaven's stormed with gay and happy onset
Of youngling things home from the War.

Against the inverted cup of azure,
Against the evening, peach and green,
The frolicsome young souls take their pleasure,
Darting the silver stars between.

Though the old nests be sad, forsaken,
The cotes of Heaven are yet unfilled :
In trees of Heaven as yet untaken
The immortal Loves lift hearts and build.

THE PREDESTINED

(W. E. H. *6th November 1914*)

DEAR, we might have known you were
To die young—and were we blind
To the light on face and hair?
Dear, so simple and so kind.

You were clean as your own sword
And as straight too and steel true.
In the Army of the Lord
What promotion waits for you!

I can see you where you stand,
Knightly soul, so clean, so brave.
With a new sword in your hand
Where the liliated banners wave.

Flower of simple chivalry,
Marked for honour and for grace;
It was very plain to see
The clear shining of your face.

You are gone now : it's turned cold :
Very good you were and dear.
Wear the looks you wore of old
When we meet,—some other year.

THE OLD SOLDIER

(14th November 1914)

LEST the young soldiers be strange in Heaven,
God bids the old soldier they all adored
Come to Him and wait for them, clean, new-shriven,
A happy door-keeper in the House of the Lord.

Lest it abash them, the great new splendour,
Lest they affright them, the new robes clean,
God sets an old face there, long-tried and tender,
A word and a hand-clasp as they troop in.

My boys! he welcomes them and Heaven is homely ;
He, their great Captain in days gone o'er.
Dear is the face of a friend, honest and comely,
As they come home from the war and he at the door.

THE FIELDS OF FRANCE

“ Nous avons chassé ce Jesus Christ ”

JESUS CHRIST they chased away
Comes again another day.
Could they do without Him then
His poor lost unhappy men ?
He returns and is revealed
In the trenches and the field.

Where the dead lie thick He goes,
Where the brown earth's red as a rose,
He who walked the waters wide
Treads the wine-press, purple-dyed,
Stoops, and bids the piteous slain
That they rise with Him again.

To His breast and in his cloak
Bears the younglings of the flock :
Calls His poor sheep to come home
And His sheep rise up and come.

They shall rest by a clear pool
'Mid the pastures beautiful !

Jesus Christ they chased away
Has come back another day.

THE OPEN ROAD

THE roads of the Sea
Are thronged with merchantmen ;
East and West, North and South
They go and come again.

All precious merchandise
They bear in their hold :
Lest the people be starving
In the night and cold.

Now tell me, good merchants,
How this thing can be
That the white ships are thronging
The roads of the sea ?

For there's death in the skies
And there's death on the earth ;
And men talked of famine
And a frozen hearth.

Yet the ships they go crowding
The roads of the sea ;
They bring home their treasures
To you and to me.

O listen, good people,
And hearing, praise God,
That the watch-dogs are keeping
The ships on their road !

They sit watchful and steady
Where the North winds blow ;
Sleepless they are keeping
The roads the ships go.

In the day, in the hour,
They will spring—until then,
Their eyes keep the courses
Of the merchantmen.

Forget not, good people,
When ye heap the white board,
When ye draw to the hearth-fire,
To praise the Lord,

That the watch-dogs unsleeping
Keep the roads of the Sea,
Up by the Northern Lights
Where the great ships be.

FOR THE AIRMEN

(To MAURICE HEWLETT)

THOU who guidest the swallow and wren,
Keep the paths of the flying men !

Over the mountains, over the seas
Thou hast given the bird-folk compasses.

Thou guidest them, yea, Thou ledest them home
By the trackless ways and the venturesome.

Look Thou then on these bird-men, far
More than the sparrows and swallows are.

When they fly in the wintry weather
Be their compass and chart together.

Keep them riding the wind. Uphold
Their passion of flight lest it grow cold.

Thy right hand be under the wing,
Thy left hand for their steadying.

The wings of the birds of Heaven be nigh
Lest their wings fail them and they die.

Make Thou their flying as deft and fleet
As the flight of the linnet or the blue-tit.

Thy hand over them, shall they fear
The spears of lightning or any spear ?

Thy hand under them, what shall appal ?
Not the fierce foe nor the sudden fall.

Show them Thy moon at night : Thy stars
Bid stand as sentinels in their wars.

Yea, make their lone tracks pleasant as
A soft meandering path in grass.

Thou that launchest the wren, the swallow
Guard our flying loves when they follow.

CHRISTMAS IN THE YEAR OF THE WAR

NEVERTHELESS this Year of Grief
The Tree of God's in leaf.

The stem, the branch quickeneth
With sap, this year of Death.

For in the time of the flowering thorn
The Babe, the Babe, is born !

Christ's folk, look up, be not dismayed,
The Lord's in the cattle shed.

He comes, a little trembling One,
To a world else lost, undone.

With His poor folk He wills to stay
In this their difficult day.

Poor war-worn world, you shall have ease !
He signs your lasting peace.

He hath given His people rest from wars,
By the cold light of stars.

The charter of their peace shall stand
Writ by His hour-old hand.

The Tree of Paradise quickeneth.
Be still,—there is no death !

A SONG FOR THE NEW YEAR

1915

THE Year of the Sorrows went out with great wind :
Lift up, lift up, O broken hearts, your Lord is kind,
And He shall call His flock home where no storms be
Into a sheltered haven out of sound of the sea.

There shall be bright sands there and a milken hill,
They shall lie in the sun there and drink their fill,
They shall have dew and shade there and grass to the
knee,
Safe in a sheltered haven out of sound of the sea.

He shall bind their wounds up and their tears shall cease :
They shall have sweetest pillows and a bed of ease.
*Come up, come up and hither, O little flock, saith He,
Ye shall have sheltered havens out of sound of the sea.*

The first day of New Year strewed the sea with dead.
Lift up, lift up, O broken heart and hanging head !
The Lord walks on the waters and a Shepherd is He
They shall have sheltered havens out of sound of the sea.

DEAD—A PRISONER

HE died the loneliest death of all,
Amid his foes he died.
But Someone's leaped the outer wall
And Someone's come inside,
And he has gotten a golden key
To set the lonesome prisoner free.

It was not Peter with the keys,
The heavenly janitor,
Who has passed them like a rushing breeze,
The gaolers at the door,
And to His bosom as a bed
Has taken the unmothered head.

A great light in the prison shone
That made the people blind :
Rise up, rise up, new-ransomed one,
And taste the sun and wind :
For I have gotten a golden key
To set all lonesome prisoners free.

*Yea they shall soar, shall spring aloft ;
Their gyves shall not be rough,
But just the links of love so soft
That they shall not cast off.
Rise up, my dear, and come away."*
And they went out to the great day.

TO R. A. A.

(20th October 1914. 24th February 1915)

Was it not a great end ?

Wrote your Philip, with a story
Of a great deed, a great death—
Not foreseeing his own glory
And his budding laurel-wreath—
In the last words he should send.

Philip's followed Alan's lead.
They are gone into the night
With the great heroes of old,
With the stars, the stars they are bright ;
They are warm ; they are not cold.
They live : they are not dead.

But the silence aches. O friend
In the darkness, cold and stricken,
For anodyne, antidote,
Tell your dead heart, that it quicken,
The last words that Philip wrote :
" Was it not a great end ? " *A great end !*

SALUTATION

To you and you and you who have given
Two sons for England's sake,—what word?
Oh, there is weeping heard in Heaven
And Mary's heart has the Eighth Sword.

Henceforth as you go through the town
The folk who see you go and come
Will doff their hats to your renown,
With : *Salvete flores Martyrum !*

O chosen from all women and men
For that high lonely destiny !
Now that we look at you, 'tis plain
God set a mark to know you by.

Your cross was growing in the tree
Before the golden world was made ;
Your martyr's palms began to be
Before " Let there be Light " was said.

And still where'er you come and go
The world's the lighter for your load.
Who thinks on common things and low
When your high sorrow takes the road ?

O predestined and pre-elect
'Tis you must bear the glorious scars.
Stand up, dear Saints, white and erect,
The wounded in the heavenly wars.

Beloved, afflicted, marked for grace.
God's folk who watch you go and come,
Call, leaning from their Paradise place,
Salvete flores Martyrum!

THE SAD SPRING

THE Spring weeps, she is forlorn ;
Well that she may weep, alas !
Now that many babes are born
Whose dear fathers lie in grass.

Snowdrops in the frozen earth
Faint and are not comforted ;
Never was so sad a birth,
Never was so sad a bed.

She must bear her pangs alone.
Where is sorrow like to hers ?
In an anguish cold as stone
Her dead soldier's child she bears.

Now her trembling arms will hold
Close the piteous downy thing
To a milky breast as cold
As the frozen water-spring.

Now she hopes and dreads to find
Likeness in the little son
To his father, brave and kind.
Like or not, her heart's undone.

Tender nurslings born in pain,
 Mother's comfort, mother's grief,
When her tears run down like rain,
 Lord, bring Thou a handkerchief.

Wipe the widow's tears away,
 Father orphan boys and girls.
Lead them out where they may play,
 With Thy hand upon their curls.

A PRAYER

(For Those Who Shall Return)

LORD, when they come back again
From the dreadful battlefield
To the common ways of men,
Be Thy mercy, Lord, revealed !
Make them to forget the dread
Fields of dying and the dead !

Let them go unhaunted, Lord,
By the sights that they have seen :
Guard their dreams from shell and sword ;
Lead them by the pastures green,
That they wander all night long
In the fields where they were young.

Grant no charnel horrors slip
'Twixt them and their child's soft face.
Breast to breast and lip to lip,
Let the lovers meet, embrace !
Be they innocent of all
Memories that affright, appal.

Let their ears love music still,
And their eyes rejoice to see
Glory on the sea and hill,
Beauty in the flower and tree.
Drop a veil that none may raise
Over dreadful nights and days.

RESURRECTION

Now the golden daffodil
Lifts from earth his shining head
That was lately frozen still
In the gardens of the dead.

Sing to the Lord a new song !
Roundelays and virelays,
Who hath slain Death and is young
Master of your holidays.

Now from places underground
Gold and purple folk will go
Haled by the shrill trumpet sound
From their wormy beds below.

Now the stone is from the tomb !
Now 'tis Easter and the morn !
Christ the Lord of Life is come,
Hath slain Death, and Life is born.

Christ the Lord of Life new-risen,
Calls the sleepers that they rise—
From the unnumbered graves, break prison,
Follow Him to Paradise.

Who be then these shining ones
Dancing with a heavenly mirth,
The King's daughters, the King's sons,
Fairer than the folk of earth ?

Graves are busier than a hive
The wind blows, the sun is warm ;
Now the dead are come alive—
Loosed is many a golden swarm.

Sing to the Lord a new song !
The Sun's risen in our East ;
Christ the Lord of Life is young.
And the young sit to the feast.



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